



The Sandpiper

Annual Children's Issue

June 2023



GA

REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.rras.org

RRAS FIELD TRIPS IN JUNE

Saturday June 3 – 8:30-11am. Join RRAS for a free guided field trip at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. Bring your binoculars and scope if you have them, and meet trip leader Gary Friedrichsen at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) for easy-to-walk trails, a beautiful view of Humboldt Bay, and the opportunity to hear and see a diverse range of shorebirds, migratory songbirds and raptors, and resident birds likely engaging in breeding activities. Reservations not required.

Saturday June 10 – 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip at Arcata Marsh with trip leader Michael Morris. Meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake).

Sunday June 11 – 9-11am. Join trip leader Ralph Bucher for a walk at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This two-mile walk is along a wide, flat, gravel-packed trail easily accessible on foot. Just outside of town, this refuge offers astounding and easy access to tidally influenced habitats including mudflats, riparian vegetation, conifers, and bay, which host a variety of geese, raptors, shorebirds, and waders. Email Ralph to sign up for this field trip at [thebook\[at\]reninet.com](mailto:thebook[at]reninet.com).

Tuesday, June 13 – 6-7:30pm. Enjoy the extended light of the summer months and join RRAS to see what the marsh birds are up to in the evening! Trip leader Michael Morris will guide a trip through the Arcata Marsh on this midweek, evening walk. In the summer the marsh is home to many resident and migratory breeding birds who take advantage of the last hours of the day to get some feeding and singing in, so join us at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) to add some birds to your weekday.

Saturday June 17 – 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip at Arcata Marsh with trip leader Gary Friedrichsen. Meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake).

Sunday June 18 – 9-11am. For a walk along the Eureka shoreline, join trip leader Ralph Bucher at the foot of Del Norte Street. This **wheelchair accessible** walk meets at the pier, where an active Osprey nest can be viewed, along with pelicans, loons, and cormorants. Email Ralph to sign up for this field trip at [thebook\[at\]reninet.com](mailto:thebook[at]reninet.com).

Saturday June 24 – 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip at Arcata Marsh with trip leader Ken Burton. Meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake).

CANCELED: Saturday June 24 – 8:30-10:30am. Join RRAS in **Southern Humboldt** on the fourth Saturday of every month at Tooby Park, one mile west of Garberville on Sprowl Creek Road. These walks will be easy walking lasting 2-3 hours each. Start time is variable so please text or call Ann at 707-296-8720 for start time each month. Heavy rain cancels.

Saturday June 24 - 9-11am. Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday. Help create bird-friendly native habitat and restore a section of the bay trail behind Bayshore Mall. We provide tools and snacks. Please bring your own water and gloves. Contact Jeremy Cashen at jeremy.cashen@yahoo.com or 214-605-7368 for more information.

Tuesday, June 27 – 6-7:30pm. Enjoy the extended light of the summer months and join RRAS to see what the marsh birds are up to in the evening! Trip leader Janelle Chojnacki will guide an evening trip through the Arcata Marsh on this midweek walk. In the summer the marsh is home to many resident and migratory breeding birds who take advantage of the last hours of the day to get some feeding and singing in, so join us at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) to add some birds to your weekday .



photo by Gary Bloomfield

The Return of Godwit Days!

By Gary Bloomfield

Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival returned with a fully live event this year, for the first time since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and it did so in a grand way!

The Festival also welcomed an additional Flagship Species this year, the California Condor, thanks to the Yurok Tribe leading the North Coast Condor Restoration Program.

Thanks are also due to the many attendees, donors, participants, speakers, trip leaders, vendors, and volunteers who all made this festival a great success.

RRAS Sponsors 17th Annual Science Fair Award

By Sue Leskiw

In March 2023, the annual Humboldt County Science Fair returned to an in-person event held at Cal Poly Humboldt. The judges awarded a \$50 prize for the best project related to birds or their habitat to Eliza Lehman, a seventh-grade student at Jacoby Creek School.

Eliza investigated what is the “best bird feed” by comparing consumption of striped black oil sunflower seeds, unsalted peanuts in shells, and Nyjer seed. She hung trays containing 120 grams of each food near shrubbery, three feet apart. During 35-minute time periods, she observed and recorded the number and species of birds that came in and what seed they consumed. She then weighed the trays, repeating the experiment over three days.

Species observed were House Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Golden- and White-crowned Sparrows, and Spotted Towhees. Between 8 and 15 individuals visited the feeder per day. Each day, the sunflower seeds were the most popular, while no peanuts were consumed.

The results supported Eliza’s hypothesis that the sunflower seeds would be the most popular food because they contain high fiber and energy. Although the birds may have checked out more than one of the feeding trays, they concentrated on the sunflower seeds, consuming 11 grams over the experimental period vs. 5 grams of Nyjer and 0 grams of peanuts. She noted that sparrows were the most common visitors and peanuts in shells were too big for this type of bird. Eliza stated that if she were to repeat the experiment, she would replace the peanuts with another food and leave the feeding trays out longer.

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Your membership in Redwood Region Audubon Society supports our field trips, programs, education and conservation efforts.

Membership in our chapter is just \$15 a year, and you will receive EcoNews, with the Sandpiper inserted. To join our local chapter, either fill in the form below, and mail it with a check for \$15 made to RRAS, or join through our website, RRAS.org.

To join National Audubon and receive the EcoNews as well as Audubon magazine, either join through our website link at RRAS.org or follow the instructions below.

Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed. (Introductory offer)

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President's Column

By Gail Kenny

Photos by Gail Kenny

I hope you have been getting out to enjoy all the spring bird activity! Part of what keeps me engaged with nature is the sense of discovery and beauty. Even though I have been birding since 1980, I am still learning more about birds. I also love wildflowers, and my fun discovery this spring has been two flowers new to me that bloom on the sea stacks around Trinidad this time of year. One of them is called Footsteps of Spring and is pictured here. I have been enjoying the spring migrants



Footsteps of spring

passing through and hearing the birds singing again. It is more fun birding now that I'm using the *Hear Birds Again* app that I wrote about in a previous column. I find myself toggling between using that and *Merlin* Sound ID. I have looked for the California Condors at Bald Hills several times, but haven't seen them as of this writing. I will keep trying. I enjoyed the pair of Mountain Bluebirds at Lyons Ranch Trailhead in April.

The resident pair of Barn Swallows are back at my house roosting in the shop (it doesn't have a door) each night. I just found the nest they are building. I had a pair of Chipping Sparrows (see accompanying photo) in the alley too. They pass through during migration.

One morning in late April I was treated to an oriole outside my living room window (most likely a first



Chipping Sparrow

year Bullock's Oriole) then an hour later a male Common Yellowthroat warbler which was a new yard bird.

It was a perfect weather day for the midweek bird sit at the McKinleyville Vista Point field trip overlooking the Mad River mouth on Thursday, April 27. Seven of us joined leader Janelle Chojnacki in enjoying the beautiful evening. Ken Burton's eBird list noted 26 species of birds, and that did not include the Bald Eagle that another participant saw as she arrived. A Chestnut-backed Chickadee perched close by giving us good looks, Turkey Vultures flew past, and Common Ravens flew overhead. Janelle recognized a raven pair as ones she had been monitoring for her graduate study project in the Clam Beach area. In the river mouth, there were a variety of shorebirds, including Whimbrels. We learned from Ken Burton that some vocalizations we were hearing were harbor seal pups! It was more of a mew than the strange sounds the adults make.

In RRAS news, we are taking our



Midweek evening bird sit at Vista Point overlooking the Mad River

summer hiatus from the speaker program which will be back in September, maybe on a different night. Our Conservation Committee is staying in the loop regarding port development plans for the offshore wind energy terminal and Nordic Aquafarms' plans for the fish farm on the Samoa Peninsula.

We are looking for volunteers to chair our

Education Committee, Program Committee, and for a Volunteer Coordinator. If you want to help or want more information, please email me at gailgkenny@gmail.com.

Results of 20th Annual Student Bird

Art Contest

Submitted by Sue Leskiw

Some 650 school kids pulled out paints, pencils, pastels, or paste to enter the 20th Annual Student Bird Art Contest. Cosponsors were RRAS and Friends of the Arcata Marsh.

The contest was held in association with mid-April's Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival in Arcata. This year, the festival returned to a four-day, in-person event at the Arcata Community Center, so all art entries were posted there for public viewing.

Copies of 2023's cash prize and honorable mention winning artwork will be displayed at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center (AMIC) during May and June. Public viewing is possible Tuesdays through Sundays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. A free cookies-and-punch reception will be held on Friday, May 19 at AMIC between 5 and 7 p.m. A downloadable booklet containing the artwork and photos from the awards ceremony will be posted in late May at www.rras.org, www.godwitdays.org, and www.arcatamarshfriends.org.

Awards totaled \$650, with 41 cash prizes plus 39 honorable mentions. Depending on the number of entries per grade, some levels were combined and others received more than one set of awards, to even out the chances of winning.

Winners of the Student Bird Art Contest

Kindergarten & Grade 1

First Place, Morgan Boynton, Aldergrove Charter, Anna's Hummingbird

Second Place, Harry Davis, Jacoby Creek, Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Third Place, Kayona Brown, Fuente Nueva Charter, Black-crowned Night-Heron

Honorable Mentions: Teddy Mainzer, Jacoby Creek, Bald Eagles; Hailey Potter, Greenpoint School, Wood Duck; Alia Kurland-Hardy, Fuente Nueva Charter, Barred Owl; Arabella Steele, Seaforth Montessori, American Robin

Grade 2

First Place, Iver Vu, Fuente Nueva Charter, Sandhill Crane; Kira Osbourne, Redwood Coast Montessori, Northern Flicker

Second Place, Wren Pittman, Fieldbrook Elementary, Spotted Owl; Aurelia Fosnaugh, Northern United Charter, Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Third Place, Ona Kypta, Garfield Elementary, Osprey; Owen Rogers, Jacoby Creek, Bald Eagle

Honorable Mentions: Sophie Adams, Northern

United Charter, Snowy Plover; Joah Nicely Alfaro, Fuente Nueva Charter, Peregrine Falcon; Aiden Salters, Northern United Charter, Bullock's Oriole; Cully Stack, Northern United Charter-Willow Creek, Bushtit; Jordan O'Connor, Fieldbrook Elementary, Bald Eagle

Grade 3

First Place, Anika Terry, Garfield Elementary, Black-crowned Night-Heron; Penn Kerhoulas, Garfield Elementary, California Quail

Second Place, Heidi Tout, Garfield Elementary, Steller's Jay; Madden McCall, Northern United Charter, American Avocet

Third Place, Michael Mead, Loleta Elementary, Bald Eagle; Bernardo Freitas, Northern United Charter, American Kestrel

Honorable Mentions: Riley Lawler, Fieldbrook Elementary, Peregrine Falcon; Raven Lovejoy, Seaforth Montessori, Northern Flicker; Calvin Angleton, Garfield Elementary, Tufted Puffin; Maelyn Hernandez-Hernandez, Morris Elementary, Spotted Owl; Doc Strong, Coastal Grove Charter, Rock Wren

Grade 4

First Place, Ayla Dunn, Union Street Charter, Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Teus Kypta, Garfield Elementary, Peregrine Falcon

Second Place, Ginger Larsen, Union Street Charter, Great Blue Heron; Ezekiel Giordano, Home Schooled, Black-crowned Night-Heron

Third Place, Maeve Warburton, Fuente Nueva Charter, Steller's Jay; LaRuca Fleming, Union Street Charter, Steller's Jay

Honorable Mentions: Zane Niehaus, Fieldbrook Elementary, Red-shouldered Hawk; Lili Kibbe, Garfield Elementary, Snowy Plover; Adelia Olson, Fuente Nueva Charter, Anna's Hummingbird; Maya Losh, Union Street Charter, Great Egret; Kennedy Howard, Morris Elementary, Belted Kingfisher; Hadley Johnson, Pacific View Charter, Burrowing Owl; Tanner Baxter, Fieldbrook Elementary, Varied Thrush

Grades 5&6

First Place, Tadeus Furaha, Coastal Grove Charter, Snowy Egret; Elianna Emery, Agnes Johnson Charter, Northern Flicker

Second Place, Allison Thompson, Sunny Brae Middle School, Steller's Jay; Alysse Gildea, Jacoby Creek, Great Blue Heron

Third Place, Irena Fugate, Northern United Charter, White-tailed Kite; Levi Duhem, Aldergrove

Charter, Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Honorable Mentions: Aria Belli, Ferndale Elementary, American Crow; Alec Wray, Northern United Charter, Tufted Puffin; Thea McKnight, Coastal Grove Charter, Barn Swallow; Cianna Pace, Northern United Charter-Willow Creek, Red-tailed Hawk; Ender Guthrie, Fuente Nueva Charter, American Goldfinch; Kaya Goff, Whitethorn Elementary, Anna's Hummingbird

Grade 7

First Place, Maysa Coelho, Agnes Johnson Charter, Cliff Swallow

Second Place, Brylee Mullaney, Miranda Junior High, Pileated Woodpeckers

Third Place, Kyle Cox, Stanwood Murphy Elementary, Mallard

Honorable Mentions: Clarisse Behling, Sunny Brae Middle School, Cedar Waxwing; Sky Paz, Sunny Brae Middle School, Anna's Hummingbird; Evie Herrera, Pacific Union, Anna's Hummingbird

Grade 8

First Place, Mariia Vasileva, Sunny Brae Middle School, Belted Kingfisher

Second Place, Julia Brands, Pacific Union, Great Blue Heron

Third Place, Alysanna Fouquette, Stanwood Murphy Elementary, Little Bunting

Honorable Mentions: Kimberley Barreto, Stanwood Murphy Elementary, Anna's Hummingbird; Kegan Ingallina, Fortuna Junior Academy, American Avocets; Lluvia Aguilar, Fortuna Middle School, Cedar Waxwing; Emileigh Schmidt, Stanwood Murphy Elementary, White-tailed Kite

Grades 9-12

First Place, Muhammad (Sultan) Sholahudin, Eureka High, Great Blue Heron

Second Place, Maggie Odell, Eureka High, American Wigeon

Third Place, Evie Dowd, Northern United Charter, Bufflehead

Honorable Mentions: Keani Pele Young, Arcata High, Marbled Godwits; Malia Stafslie, South Fork High, Anna's Hummingbird; Hannah Webb, Eureka High, Varied Thrush; Iris Hahner, Academy of the Redwoods, Yellow-breasted Chat; October Mintey, Arcata High, Great Egret

**continued
next page**



Anna's Hummingbird
by Morgan Boynton



American Crow
by Aria Belli



Spotted Owl
by Margot Nims



Belted Kingfisher
by Mariia Vasileva



Great Blue Heron
by Muhammad
(Sultan) Sholahudin

Student Bird Art, cont.

Best Bird in Habitat Awards

Margot Nims, Grade 3, Garfield Elementary, Spotted Owl; Mia Hong-Novotney, Grade 4, Fuente Nueva Charter, Barred Owl; Zeno Fosnaugh, Grades 5&6, Northern United Charter, Cedar Waxwing; Emma Ayres, Grades 5&6, Garfield Elementary, Marsh Wren; Arianna Benitez, Grades 9-12, Aldergrove Charter, Pileated Woodpecker



American Avocet
by Madden McCall



Chestnut-backed Chickadee
by Ayla Dunn

Results of 18th Annual Student Nature Writing Contest

Submitted by Sue Leskiw

Over 90 Humboldt students in grades 4 through 10 entered a poem or essay in a contest associated with the 2023 Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival. RRAS awarded \$100 in prizes to the following schoolchildren who explored the topic “What Nature Means to Me”:

Junior Division (Grades 4-8) Winners

First Place: Trillium Pitts, Grade 7, Alder Grove Charter

Second Place: Thea McKnight, Grade 6, Coastal Grove Charter

Third Place: Rootsy Quinn, Grade 6, Agnes Johnson Charter

Honorable Mentions: Aleah Moschetti, Grade 6, Agnes Johnson Charter; Alysse Gildea, Grade 6, Jacoby Creek School

Senior Division (Grades 9-12) Winners

First Place: Braden Stevens, Grade 9, McKinleyville High

Second Place: KM, Grade 9, McKinleyville High

Third Place: Chris Zetter, Grade 9, McKinleyville High

Honorable Mentions: Jimi Bradshaw, Grade 9, McKinleyville High; Theodore Yarbrough, Grade 9, McKinleyville High; Myrsadies Hufford, Grade 9, McKinleyville High

A booklet containing the submissions from all the winners will be available in late May for downloading at www.rras.org.

First Place Winner, Junior Division (Grades 4-8)

“Winter Dream”

By Trillium Pitts, 7th Grade, Alder Grove Charter

The cold accosts me the second I step out of the car. Icy fingers claw at my cheeks, leaving them raw and red. Frosty fangs bite through my jacket and scrape my arms, injecting the winter wind into my bloodstream. I shiver, my hands tucked deep into my pockets, my frozen feet buried under a mound

of soft snow.

Winter in the mountains is a quiet thing. The silence makes me feel like the whole world is sleeping.

The muffled thump of snow hitting the ground, dumped off a heavy-laden branch, breaks my reverie. But the world keeps sleeping, blanketed in an unblemished layer of pure white snow.

I take a step, and a thousand perfect ice crystals crunch and compact under my boot. My tracks are like un-kept secrets, flitting guiltily where they’re not supposed to go. Leading away or back, I can’t tell.

The trees stand tall and silent, bearing the weight of a hundred snowfalls. Their proud green colors are muted and muffled by their heavy burdens.

The rocks lie still and sleeping along the river, coated in soft snow. The stream is the only thing moving. Its icy-cold waters trickle tentatively through the pristine white landscape, flowing towards a greater river, flowing towards the sea. It gurgles softly, afraid to disrupt the silence. It is a breath of life in this still world.

I follow the stream downhill. The trees thicken around me, hardly moving. My sister’s laughter floats along the wind like a ray of sunlight, making the snow glimmer for a millisecond...the trees stir with hope, then lapse back into a stillness as deep as the snow.

A junco sends its trilling song into the still air. At the first frost, it donned its winter title of “snowbird,” trying to fit in with the newborn whiteness that has swept across the mountainside. A woodpecker responds with its sharp tapping, breaking the silence in staccato beats like hammer strikes. A Steller’s Jay flies swiftly across the cold sky, searching for a haven from the cold. It lands on an evergreen bough and fluffs its feathers, looking like an ornament on a Christmas tree.

I reach my destination—the giant boulder. It stands like a sentinel on the edge of a rocky ravine, separate from the swath of snowy trees from which I’ve just emerged. The wind, not so unfriendly now, plays curiously with my hair and brushes my face softly.

I climb up the boulder, fitting my hands and feet into helpful crevices worn by time and wind and a thousand other winters. When I reach the top and look out on the world spread out before me, I catch my breath in awe.

It goes on forever—this wintry wonderland stretching across the mountain, turning bare rock and dirt into a shimmering expanse of pearly white. The snowdrifts are accented with blue shadows and golden swaths of sun-soaked snow. Its brilliance almost blinds me. And the trees—tall, stately, bearing their burdens boldly—stand still and quiet, imprisoned in a deep and silent slumber.

This winter dream stretches to the sea, glimmering faintly on the horizon. Its sapphire-blue waters are a stark contrast from the snowy world spread out before me, but somehow they fit together like puzzle pieces—all the colors and shapes of this view of the world.

Its vastness makes me feel immeasurably small and unimportant. But still—I, a little speck in this sleeping winter dream—I am a part of this. This vast, silent world has accepted me, folded me into its frosty embrace. I stand still and quiet, imagining that I am a tree, regal and tall. Waiting for the snow to melt away, leaving spring in its wake. I imagine that

I am winter, biding its time till next year, when it can turn the world into a silent, glimmering dream once again.

First Place Winner, Senior Division (Grades 9-12)

“Fishing Trip with My Dad”

By Braden Stevens, 9th Grade, McKinleyville High School

I was fishing out in the bay, and there was a big tug on my line. I dropped my hat, pulled hard, and reeled in my fish. There was something magical about it.

Early one morning on Father’s Day, my dad and I got ready to leave with my uncle to go fishing in Humboldt Bay. I was so tired from waking up so early that I fell asleep in the truck. When we got there, I woke up and got my pole while my uncle and dad loaded the boat into the water. My dad’s friend showed up to fish with us, and finally, after 20 minutes, we got on the water. We motored around for a while looking for a spot to stop and put our hooks in the water. While I was sitting there, I was looking at the birds, the sun, and the boat bobbing through the water.

The sun was dancing on the water, it was hot, and I was melting like popsicles on a baking summer day. We got nothing, so we decided to go elsewhere. We found a nice place to stop, and there was a cool afternoon breeze. I was finally cooling down. I threw out my line and waited for a bite. Nibble after nibble and nothing. Then, all of a sudden, there was screaming. My uncle shouted, “I got something!” He was happier than a kid on Christmas. It was a big one, 28 inches long! I was as mad as a bull that I got nothing. Left and right people were getting fish except me. I was furious because I was getting nothing.

I was starting to give up when all of a sudden *yank!* A fish bit my hook. I was pulling and reeling for what seemed like an hour, but it was more like 15 seconds. I was dreaming about how big the fish was, and I was hoping that it was going to be bigger than my uncle’s fish. I doubted that I was going to catch it because I had no luck all day. When I felt my pole about to slip out of my hands, I pulled back.

I began reeling like a madman. The fish was squirming at the end of my line, and I put it in the boat. I then whacked it with a piece of wood to kill it. Its blood splattered me, but I didn’t care because I was so happy. I finally got a fish. I was jumping up and down, and I almost fell off the boat. It was a big sucker, weighing in at 32 inches!

Finally, my patience paid off. It was the biggest fish that day. We fished a little more that day, and my dad caught one, but my fish was still the biggest. We all got a snack, and then we started loading the boat back on the trailer. After we got the trailer loaded up, we got some ice cream and headed home.

Because it was such a peaceful day, because the water was so still, and because I was with my dad on Father’s Day, this remains my best day fishing.